



## Time to Outsource Police?

Posted by [Pierluigi Oliverio](#) on Monday, July 12, 2010

From time to time I have talked about outsourcing certain city services to save money—so the city can use the money saved on core services we provide to the community. When I first introduced a pilot program for outsourcing park maintenance at the Rose Garden Park in 2007, the council (except for Mayor Reed) shrugged off my idea. Now, the topic of how to provide services to San Jose residents with limited revenue is being discussed. For example, the city was able to open some of the pools that were due to be closed because the city outsourced to private organizations which are less costly.

The City of San Jose and other cities have declining revenues and structural deficits. Most residents now understand that not every service from a city must be done by a person earning an unsustainable pension.

Last week on San Jose Inside, an anonymous blogger using the handle "Just a Lowly Police Officer" raised the question of outsourcing police to private security guards. First, I must say what a sad choice of a handle. I am thinking he/she was attempting to be sarcastic, but who knows? How can this person expect us to respect their vocation if they do not respect it? None of the many people I know that serve as San Jose police officers are lowly. By contrast they are all good people with integrity.

Actually, I have been asked this same question about outsourcing police services in person. People have asked "why don't you outsource the police?" My response is one of astonishment, because I think it shows a brutish lack of understanding. I ask them, "Are you serious? Do you really think that someone we recruit, background, vet, train, test and issue a gun to so they can protect and serve as a police officer is the same as a janitor? Do you really think that is the same level of qualification? The same level of risk? The same level of expertise?" The answer to these questions is simply "no." Even the notion is ridiculous. At this point the person who asks me the question realizes they asked a foolish question and they move on.

It's time to wake up, as we have reached a new level of fiscal austerity and there is no monetary candy falling from the sky. We have to make tough choices. So you can sit on the sidelines and whine about times of budget surplus or wake up to our current fiscal environment.

I do however support replacing desk jobs at the police station with civilians to allow more police on the street, as recommended in our city auditors report:

<http://www.sanjoseca.gov/auditor/AuditReports/1002/1002.pdf>

I will be hosting the 4th Annual Safety Fair & Movie Night at our beautiful San Jose Municipal Rose Garden on Sept. 10 at 7pm. It will be an opportunity to show off the Rose Garden as the results will have been announced on San Jose's ranking as America's Best Rose Garden contest. It is also an opportunity to do something for Trace Elementary and help with raising money to fund school supplies for the 16 classrooms, library and theater that burned down.

Please consider attending and picnicking as we watch the fun family animated movie How to Train your Dragon. Voluntary contributions will be accepted and there is no limit to what you can donate. Checks should be made out to Trace PTO (Parent Teacher Organization); cash donations will be accepted as well.

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